

**City of Alexandria, Virginia  
Park and Recreation Commission**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, January 19, 2012, 7:00 p.m.  
Charles Houston Recreation Center  
901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, Virginia**

**Summary Minutes**

Commission Members: Chairperson, Judy Guse-Noritake, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Richard Brune, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Robert Moir, Mollie Timmons, Caleb Vogt. Absent: John Sullivan.

RPCA Staff: Director James Spengler, William Chesley, Deputy Director Recreation Services, Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director Park Operations, Ron Kagawa, Division Chief Park Planning and Capital Projects, Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, David Ghezzi, Architect, Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, and Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant. Absent: Alisa Carrel, Deputy Director Office on the Arts, Cheryl Lawrence, Acting Director, Marketing, Special Events & Marina.

Guests: Rashad K. Friday, MBA, MS, Project Manager, and Lisa Jaatinen, P.E., Project Manager, City of Alexandria, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES).

- I. Call to Order by Chair. 7:00 pm.
- II. Approval of Summary Minutes from October 20, 2011, November 17, 2011.
  - October 20, 2011- Rich Brune motioned to approve the minutes, William Cromley seconded the motion, the minutes were approved.
  - November 17, 2011- Rich Brune motioned to approve the minutes, Caleb Vogt seconded the motion, the minutes were approved. The P&RC did not meet in December.
- III. **Washington Street Streetscape Improvement Project Presentation** - Rashad K. Friday, T&ES. See Staff Report – dated 1/9/12, Washington St. Streetscape Project (VDOT Project #U000-100-616) City of Alexandria, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES). Rashad Friday, project manager, gave a brief verbal presentation on the streetscape project. The project area is Washington St., between Church and Gibbon Sts. (see map). The Streetscape Project – will make improvements to sidewalks with brick, buffers, and street trees. The lighting poles and fixtures will be replaced from the existing Cobra head lights to the National Park Service Antique Decorum existing light fixtures. Additionally, a new Capital Bikeshare Station will be added. The project is federally funded and is moving at a very aggressive time schedule. The project is currently in the design phase- with completion of the design phase anticipated for the spring of 2012. Construction is expected to begin in the summer, for duration of five to six months. T&ES has been working with RPCA Park Planning, Design and Capital Development staff Ron Kagawa. Please direct comments to [Rashad.Friday@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Rashad.Friday@alexandriava.gov). For copy of presentation see [www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation/Commission](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation/Commission) Reports.
  - Questions/Comments:
  - The Chair and Commission discussed widening the sidewalk near the block north of St. Mary's Cemetery. The Chair observed that people traveling south to the bridge or heading to Jones Point Park currently have difficulty making their way on Washington Street to and from the access to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge pedestrian/bike lane due to the very narrow

sidewalk and the parallel parking along the closest blocks. This is further complicated by poles for power lines being located in the middle of the narrow sidewalk. On weekends this gets a lot of bike and walker traffic and the bikers ride on the sidewalk because of the parking along the street. A suggestion was made to possibly remove the parallel parking on the weekend and stripe it for weekend bike use, parking during the weeks, to allow people to access the bridge trail on foot and bikes more easily particularly on the east side of Washington Street.

- Cromley- suggested installing a striped crosswalk in the future to help alert pedestrians where to cross Washington near the bridge.
- Friday- widening sidewalk is not planned. In response to another question, he said traffic lane widths near area are very narrow, 9-10 feet. It will be a challenge to improve bike width.
- Chair- regarding parallel parking-make this is a share road only on the weekends, allowing parking during the week.

- IV. Discussion on Friends Groups: See Attached Report- Laura Durham and Dana Wedeles gave an update on “Friends Groups”. (See Staff Report). Park Planning reviewed the process for establishing park “friends groups” in surrounding jurisdictions, i.e. Fairfax, Arlington, and Montgomery Counties, as compared to groups in the City of Alexandria. Arlington Co. is similar to Alexandria City. In Fairfax and Montgomery Co. all Friends Groups are required to be 501C3 or to partner with 501C3 groups. The Chair said this is a good idea because there are reporting requirements. Organizing a 501C3 group is a long process (takes about three years). There are many advantages of 501C3 groups, such as the ability to accept donations and tax advantages. An example of a 501C3 partnership in the City of Alexandria City is the Miracle League of Alexandria, which has partnered with the Kelly Cares organization to build a miracle field at Lee Center field. Another example of a potential partnership for the Duron building and park, is to partner with the Del Ray Artisans which is a 501C3 organization. The Chair and Director discussed the challenges and opportunities of overlapping friends groups in one park. The Chair believes there should be a limit of one friends group for each park, while the Director believes that more will get accomplished by allowing multiple friends groups to co-exist in parks.

The Next Steps for Staff:

1. Standardize the MOU format for future and renewing friend’s groups (and other partnerships) in Alexandria.
2. Establish a step-by-step process for interested groups.
3. Provide information on the process through the Park Planning website and other marketing platforms.

- V. Division Updates: See Staff Reports.

A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley - See Staff Report.

- Staff is gearing up for basketball season. Youth Sports has increased 23% during the last three years. Staff is collaborating with Alexandria Soccer Association (ASA) to do after school soccer clinics. Director RPCA has spoken with sports staff - with the growth this year in basketball, they are running out of space in the gym. If no additional facilities are coming on-line staff may have to: restrict enrollment, implement a wait list, charge a fee, or extend program hours. The Chair underscored to Commissioners the importance of attending the upcoming budget meetings, to encourage full-size basketball courts, and athletic fields. Mr. Chesley said 90 to 100 teams are trying to find an uncommitted space for practice sessions most evenings. The lack of space impacts staff’s ability to hold drop-in programs.

B. **Park Operations Report** - Jack Browand - See Staff Report.

- The Department is moving forward with the hiring of two new Division Chiefs. The Division Chief of Natural Resources will be on-board soon. This new position will oversee, Urban Forestry, Horticulture, land management, school sites, and the “Buddie Ford” Nature Center.
- C. Office of the Arts Update - Alisa Carrel (not in attendance) - See Staff Report.
- D. Park Planning Updates – Ron Kagawa and Division Team.
- i. **Division Updates: See Staff Reports.**
    - **External Project Requests (Fall 2011)** - Update from November 17, 2011 P&RC Meeting - See Staff Report. See report for list of projects (8) and Commission recommendations.
    - **Active Park Projects including Capital Improvement Projects-Update** - See Staff Report. Mr. Kagawa provided an update on the Freedman’s Cemetery project bids. The first set of bids was rejected by the City’s Purchasing Department. Staff will review a new set of bids tomorrow. In response to a question from Mr. Brune as to why the first bids were rejected, Mr. Kagawa said the project is being constructed with mitigation funds from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project, and has to meet a number of FHWA and VDOT procurement requirements.
    - **Capital Facilities Maintenance Projects (CFMP)** - Update January 2012 – See Staff Report. David Ghezzi, Architect provided update. The reports show ongoing and completed maintenance projects at City Recreation Centers, and the 4-Mile Run “Duron” community building. The Department of General Services in collaboration with RPCA is developing a system-wide situational analysis of Recreation Center mechanical, electrical and structural systems. Findings will provide guidance for future priorities and resource needs. Director RPCA, James Spengler said the department is trying to move to predictive maintenance. The City has a number of CFMP accounts, totaling several million dollars a year to repair and renovate existing structures. Better coordination is needed among Departments with CFMP programs, to ensure that as the City builds new facilities (e.g. P.Y. Park, Witter Field) there is a corresponding analysis, and establishment of a budget for future repairs/replacements. Industry standards for buildings, asset’s value, maintenance budget, and depreciation process will also be examined. Input will be needed from the P&RC in the future.
    - **Memorandum to the Mayor and City Council dated January 4, 2012** – Progress Update, Jones Point Park, Witter Athletic Complex, Potomac Yard Park and Potomac Yard/Simpson Park Athletic Field - See Staff Report. Information was provided in response to an inquiry from Councilman Fannon. The Chair, said the neighbors seem satisfied with the progress on the work at JPP. The park will be one of the largest in the City and is expected to come on-line at the end of June 2012. The park will be managed and maintained by the NPS. At Witter Athletics, the rectangular fields will be complete in the spring; however the park will not be completed until fall, 2012. Action item: The Director reminded staff to schedule a ribbon cutting for these events in the fall.
- E. **Marketing, Special Events & Waterfront Update** - Cheryl Lawrence (absent) - See Staff Report for a list of upcoming events. The Chair commented that there are a number of new events on the list; she noted that the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual G.W. Parkway Classic 10 Miler race will be held –April 22. Jack Browand briefed Commissioner Moir on the new Civil War Ballooning Event to be held on April 28. He stated that balloons were used during the Civil War for observation. Activities will occur in the area of Ben Brenman Park.

Other- The new City mobile stage was delivered in December, and is expected to be ready for use by the summer season.

**VI. Director's Report - James Spengler (verbal updates):**

- A. **Metro Station location and impact on Potomac Yard Park:** Please see Staff Report: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in cooperation with the City of Alexandria, WMATA, and National Park Service (NPS) are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Potomac Yard Metro Station. The Director said the importance of bringing this item before the Commission during this stage, is to encourage active discussion of the project, to seek the best Alternative (see report). Kagawa - said two of the Alternatives being considered (D-Series) may impact the P.Y. Landbay K Linear Park. Tracks will be elevated. Scale of construction is similar to Tysons Corner-VA Route 123- metro flyover. The drawings identify concept locations but do not demonstrate the visual or jurisdictional impacts. For example, the actual track and easements may be three times the physical width of the track itself. It is important that there be public comment on these schemes. On February 6, options will be presented, City Hall, Room 1101.

The Chair provided brief background on the federal EIS process. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) the full range of options have to be disclosed and made available to the public for comment. Comments will be invited at this meeting. The Chair encouraged members to attend the February 6 meeting, and comment during the early stages of the Draft EIS.

- B. **RPCA FY13 Budget and CIP Update (verbal report):** See Budget Handouts:

- **FY 2013 Budget Adjustment Requests Summary:** The Director RPCA briefed the Commission on the additional budget requests and answered questions. (See Report for list of items). The City Manager will make his budget recommendations to Council in February. There will be an add/delete session. The budget will be adopted at the first meeting in May.
- **FY 2013 Potential Expenditure Reduction Summary:** The Director reviewed the list of potential budget reductions with the Commission and answered questions.
- The Chair asked the Director to keep the Commission informed, they will weigh in on budget items if needed.

- C. **School 10-year CIP FY13 to FY22:** See Attached Chart - RPCA/ACPS Shared Facility Combined CIP's. The Director RPCA asked Mr. Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Projects to prepare a comparison chart of RPCA/ACPS CIP projects in common, with the goal of joint planning. There are several meetings scheduled with ACPS. The Director, also suggested to the School Superintendent, to allow RPCA staff to handle outdoor school CIP tasks. This would allow ACPS staff to focus more on their indoor facilities. Mr. Spengler said that the City and ACPS CIP's processes should be combined. In addition, there needs to be community facilities CIP to include jointly shared facilities regardless of ownership. Planning should be focused at the community facility level. An advantage of collaborating with ACPS is that the schools have a large CIP budget; this would prove beneficial for expanding services.

As part of the Jefferson Houston project, the School Board approved a document called Pre-k to 8 Educational Specifications. The document specifies the types of rooms and activities that will take place inside certain schools, and outdoor areas. The Chair commented that specifications are based on State of Virginia Standards, which are sub-

urban, Alexandria City is urban. The Director said a companion document is needed, to look at what community activities can take place at facilities – to meet community needs, in addition to academics activities. There is also a need to look at how the rooms are arranged within facilities to meet community needs.

Dana Wedeles and Park Planning staff reviewed the chart for the Commission, items in red show the major conflict areas between the RPCA, and ACPS, Capital Improvement budgets (See chart). Wedeles said staff reviewed items that appeared questionable with ACPS staff and ACPS will provide clarification. The Chair said that some of the discrepancies may be due to recent turnover in ACPS planning staff. The Chair and staff reviewed the larger dollar projects on the chart (See chart- pg. 2) including the following synthetic turf field conversions projects.

Hammond Middle School FY19- Artificial turf is proposed for lower Hammond field, estimated cost \$1.8 million (a low estimate given site conditions). ACPS stated they are unsure if they want a field here, however cost is included in the CIP for the time being. Chair- There is also discussion regarding this field in the Beauregard Plan that in addition to installing an artificial turf field at Ramsay, there may be Developer money for Lower Hammond field? The question is why it is in the school CIP when the target could and should be developer dollars to do it in the same time-frame.

George Washington Middle School- FY17- artificial turf to be installed at Braddock field estimated cost- \$1.8 million. In response to question from Cromley, as to whether the field includes lights. Wedeles- the CIP-does not specify whether lights are included.

Minnie Howard-FY20. ACPS- has money allocated for replacement of artificial turf- 2.5+ million. RPCA also has replacement of turf in their CIP plan for FY2017. Chair- there seems to be a lack of understanding of who is responsible, ownership, maintenance, operation of CIP for some items.

Baum- asked how these discrepancies will be handled by RPCA.  
Wedeles- They are having open dialog with ACPS.

Chair- four new tennis courts are also being proposed at Minnie Howard. Parents at T.C want six courts located there for tournaments. Land is scarce there.

T.C. Williams H.S. FY19- install artificial turf baseball field. Chair- they don't currently have a baseball field- a new baseball field be would larger than the athletic field-there not enough land available here. Moir- spoke with Athletic Director, the thought is to put a baseball field near Chinquapin. The Athletic Dept. wants to move activities back near school. Also discussed putting a softball field near school.

Action: Email comments to Dana Wedeles at [Dana.Wedeles@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Dana.Wedeles@alexandriava.gov).

- D. **Jefferson Houston School Open Space and K-8 sports field planning-** William Cromley liaison for the project gave update. Mr. Cromley, after speaking with a school board member, was surprised to find that no money had been budgeted for a field yet. There was talk about having some small fields around the project. Staff said it is critical that an artificial turf field, with lights be part of the project. The Chair said that this will be discussed at the monthly City Council/School Board meeting on Monday at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Workroom. The Chair attends these meetings regularly. Mr. Cromley attends the Schools Steering Committee meetings; which are held 2-3 hrs. every week, he would welcome Ms. Baum attending with him, now that the Waterfront SAP is coming to an end. The Chair may also try to attend as schedule permits. The Chair referred

members to the list of Community Input Meetings (See Handout). The next meeting is February 6. The Chair will be unable to attend because the P.Y. Metro Station EIS meeting is the same day. The Chair encouraged members to attend these meetings.

The Director RPCA said that attending these meetings is important because Jefferson Houston will be the first Pre-K through 8 school. Cora Kelly and Patrick Henry schools will follow this model. What happens here will impact other projects. The ACPS Pre K-8 Education Specifications adopted by the School Board, state that at a minimum a middle school should have one full-size field, so why is this not included. Education Specs. also say that the school will have a gymnasium, available for use after school hours; however, the size of the gymnasium is not specified. We need fields with artificial turf with lights, and full-sized gymnasiums. It would also be nice to have the community rooms located in accessible area. Facilities need to serve the community. Chair- said there are no more funds available; we have to accomplish needs jointly with ACPS. There is also concern that when Patrick Henry is re-built, on the existing field, while the existing school is left in place this will add to the deficit in fields.

Discussion on field size:

The Chair, Commissioners and RPCA staff discussed what the standard size and recommendations are for recreational fields and gymnasiums. RPCA Park Planning staff provided standard sizes of the field – 330 X 260 sq. ft., this information was later corrected to 380 X 260 sq. ft. which includes run out area. The specification size of a full-sized gymnasium is 12,000 sq. ft. The Director RPCA said that the ACPS Education Specifications state the size of a full-sized field to be 200 sq. ft. X 400 sq. ft., this is different than RPCA standards. The Chair asked Commissioners to remember and communicate these specifications when they are attending meetings. After discussion and at the suggestion of Mr. Forbes, the Chair and Commission agreed to take a more formal approach and convey RPCA's specifications in a written letter to the School Board, who may not be aware of the recommended specifications for recreational programs. The Chair said that when we build a green building, the specs. state specifically that rooftop areas should be used for gardens. The Chair said that ACPS should be encouraged to do rooftop planning, and to use school rooftops for outdoor classes and activities. Ms. Wedeles encouraged staff to attend the February 6 meeting.

Action item: The Chair asked Ms. Wedeles to email the Commission with the time and location of each meeting, and to keep the Commission briefed with bulleted updates as issues arise.

- E. City Manager new Organizational Chart - See Attached memorandum dated 1/6/12 from new City Manager Rashad M. Young, CMO –Senior Staff Realignment. The Director RPCA will now report to Debra Collins, Assistant City Manager for the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). Prior to this change RPCA was positioned, more in the development area. The focus now will be more in line with Youth and Human Services. The Chair recently met with Assistant City Manager Collins, in order to bring her up to date on some items.
- F. Jones Point Park Update- See Attached Memo from RPCA, Park Planning, Design & Capital Development Team. There were no comments.

**VII.** Nomination of Officers for 2012 - Elections to be held in February:

The Chair asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Commissioner Forbes motioned to nominate the current slate of officers for the 2012 term. The motion was seconded by Rich Brune. All were in favor. Members nominated for re-election are: Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair, Robert Moir, Vice Chair, and Richard Brune, Secretary. A formal vote will be held at the February meeting.

**VIII. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):**

- a. **Waterfront Committee** - Gina Baum. A public hearing is scheduled for Saturday, January 21, 2012 with City Council on the Waterfront SAP in City Hall, Council Chambers. The Chair distributed a letter from the Waterfront Work Group to the Mayor dated 1/6/12. P&RC comments are reflected in the letter. The Chair, and Commissioners Baum and Cromley, have signed up to speak at the hearing. The Chair encouraged others to attend the meeting and speak in support of the Plan. Having a continuous waterfront walk is important. The Chair said that the Commission interests generally align with the plan going before City Council, the meeting is expected to be lengthy.
- b. **Youth Sport Committee** – Bob Moir- no report. Mr. Moir recently replaced Jeffrey Murphy on the YSC. Mr. Murphy attended the last YSC meeting.
- c. **Four Mile Run** - Ripley Forbes- no report.
- d. **Freedman's Cemetery** - Bob Moir- group discussed bids.
- e. **ACPS & Capital Improvements**- Judy Guse-Noritake. The Chair attended the ACPS CIP meeting. The field and track at Francis Hammond School was discussed. There was support for the field, by School Board members, Sheryl Gorsuch and Mimi Carter, and by City Council members.
- f. **Jones Point Park Liaison Group**- Judy Guse-Noritake- See Item. III. A.i, bullet #4.
- g. **Community Gardens Policy- Next Steps**- Judy Noritake. The Chair is in the process of developing a list of names for a meeting to discuss community gardens. The group will look at various garden options. Target date for meeting is February.
- h. **Ft. Ward**- Ripley Forbes and Bob Moir: Mr. Forbes -said group's oversight is good. The primary purpose is to outline a long term Management Plan. Money has been set aside in the budget. The next step will be to focus on the historical and interpretative elements. Moir- said strong leadership and direction are needed. There was a discussion of moving meetings from Ft. Ward Park because it is not ADA compliant, group prefers to stay at Ft. Ward. Laura Durham said meetings will be held at Minnie Howard in future.
- i. **ACPS School Projects**- Judy Noritake- Jefferson Houston presentation-TBD. Kagawa- project not sufficiently funded for the all-weather field.
- j. **Jefferson Houston School** – William Cromley. Mr. Cromley distributed a flier (see Handout) with the dates upcoming Community Input Meetings – (3/6, 4/10, 5/8, 6/4/12).

**OTHER-New Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Open Document Rules:**

The Chair sent members an email with the new FOIA Open Document Rules on January 25, 2012, information includes a cover memo from Joanna C. Anderson, Assistant City Attorney (copy attached). "Currently members of boards and commissions do not have City email addresses and are not directly on the City's FOIA Systems" (pg. 2, para. 5). The new regulations would establish City Email Accounts for the Planning Commission in order to help comply with FIOA requests. The new guidelines apply to other boards/commissions including the Park and Recreation Commission. The Chair expressed concern about the burden these new rules place on the P&RC, which is only an advisory group. She has received two recent FOIA requests asking to disclose information relative to electronic communications of PRC business. The Chair said she

does not keep email records long term (7 years required) on her computer. They are being advised to maintain separate email accounts for the P&RC communications. The first FOIA the Chair received was on Hammond Lights. The Chair cautioned members to be mindful of FOIA rules including requirements related to keeping electronic documents including emails.

**IX.** Agenda items for February meeting and location: Public Hearing on Beauregard Corridor Plan-TBD - invite "Friends of Dora Kelly", location, Charles Houston Community Center, to be confirmed. The Chair will be out of town in March, Vice Chair Robert Moir will chair March meeting.

**X.** Adjourned: 9:35 p.m.

At the close of the meeting, the Commission will take comments on any other topic from the public. None were received.